

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

March 19, 1998 LB 1108

the state of Nebraska far better than I could if I tried for a long, long time. I'm going to read this as it was given to me. I'm calling you today as the president of the Nebraska Family Support Network which gives support to families with children with behavioral or psychiatric disorders and as a mother of a son with mental illness. Please add strong language to LB 1108 to keep the Department of HHS from closing out any beds in the regional centers across the state. We as families know that we don't have adequate family services in place. The Nebraska Family Support Network has the only 800 number in the state for families in this situation. Therefore, we receive calls from all over the state, including Norfolk. Families are telling us that services HHS say are available have huge waiting lists. I can verify this as a parent because I have spent 15 hours over the last three weeks and \$250 in long distance phone bills to find services for my son. In fact, HHS didn't give me information that was accurate. They said, quote, this service is available. But when I called, I found the service was not adequate and was told to call Norfolk. But the place in Norfolk the resident lives alone and is only required to go to the clubhouse three times a week. As an aside, I believe that she's talking about an adjunct of Liberty Center. Then when I called, I found the service was not adequate was told, da, da, da, da, da boop boom. When dealing with youth with disorders, they will only last 24 to 48 hours before turning back to drinking and drugs, not to mention there is a 6-month period...waiting waiting period to get in. Nebraska Family Support Network has received over 5,000 calls from families who can't get the treatment needed for their kids, 5,000 calls. Throwing kids in and out of hospitals doesn't work, it only makes them worse. Our son has been in the hospital 20 times. If this treatment worked then, our kids wouldn't be getting worse. I called seven weeks ago for help for our son and received none. He was then taken to the crisis center, and this is here in Lincoln, which caused trauma and injury to our family. My son is presently at the regional center here in Lincoln. I have been there every day but one for the last three weeks and I have seen no empty beds. There are people who are being kept in the crisis center because there are no beds available at the regional center. HHS is not being fair to families and to folks with illness. I called Jessie Rasmussen four weeks ago and she told me she would call me back the following Monday. She never called back. I